

The Call of Blood

We Americans pride ourselves on being a nation of rootless individuals, cut off from the history that chained Old Europe to a cycle of wars and revolutions and bound to one another not by ties of blood and soil but only by the bloodless abstraction of self-evident truths. Rooted in no one place, our corporate aristocrats move as frequently as Roman military officers or Methodist preachers, and, while we may take pride in our own wealth and accomplishments, we are often inclined to minimize the legacy we have received from our ancestors. I remember a *New Yorker* cartoon I saw as a child. Two men are sitting at their club and looking at a third. "There's young Smedley, a self-made man. Started with only two million and look where he is today." Those were the days when two million bucks were two million bucks.

And yet many of these same Americans do make an effort to stay in touch with their relatives and with the places associated with their family past. My wife's mother, the widow of a transient military officer, still attends reunions of his fighter wing stationed in England during World War II and makes frequent sentimental journeys to the home of her childhood, the places where she bore and reared her children, and the European lands from which her ancestors emigrated. Her sister has been working for years on a massive genealogy, and this devotion to family history is hardly unusual. One of my cousins married a few years ago, and her new father-in-law spends much of his time probing the ancestral roots of the grandchild that has given new life to his declining years.

I grew up hearing a great many stories about my paternal ancestors but never took the trouble to check anything out until all the relatives who might have helped me were dead. With the help of a kind man whom I found by accident on the internet—his family intersects with mine in the early 20th century—I was able to trace the Flemings back to Castle Island in County Kerry, Ireland, whither they had apparently immigrated from Scotland in the middle of the 18th century. Because of their Scottish origin and because my father's mother was

of Scottish extraction (the family settled in Prince Edward Island after fleeing the Revolution in North Carolina) from the Carolinas, I have always thought of myself as more Scottish than Irish.

Although my father never accepted it, the standard view is that the Flemings were originally from Flanders, and many of them accompanied William the Bastard on his invasion of England. I therefore take a justifiable pride in the recent victory of the Vlaams Blok, which gained 24.1 percent of the vote in the Flemish regional elections held on June 13. Not only is the Vlaams Blok the most important Flemish nationalist party, it is a conservative party, and its victory makes it the largest party not only in Flanders but perhaps in all of Belgium, where political parties are as common as brussel sprouts. Inevitably, the mainstream parties—Socialists, Christian Democrats, and Greens—have formed a coalition sworn to keep members of the Blok out of government, a tactic described by Vlaams Blok leaders as the "*cordon sanitaire*."

The principal beneficiaries of this policy, as Joshua Livestro explained in the *Wall Street Journal Europe* (June 16), have been the Socialists, who can only hold power, in their moderately conservative country, by freezing out the VB. Like other nationalist parties in Europe, the Vlaams Blok would like to slow the tidal wave of Third World immigrants that is washing over Europe. In Bruges (or Brugge, as it is known in Flemish), which I visited this past August, immigrants seemed to outnumber even the mob of tourists, who are attracted by the great beauty of the city. (Even with the tourists, Bruges is worth seeing.)

Their opposition to immigration is only one of the VB's sins against the New World Order. Some leftists are equally disturbed by the party's defense of traditional morality. Writing in *De Standard*, Tom Naegels (January 8) concedes "there are politicians in at least three mainstream parties—the New Flemish Alliance, the Christian-Democrat Party and the governing Liberal Party—who adopt positions similar to the Vlaams Blok." The real objection, however, derives from the Blok's

conservative family policies, its deeply felt ethical objections to abortion and euthanasia, its radical pursuing of the interests of Flanders, its republicanism, these are the issues voiced by no other party[—]these are in practice the indiscussable phantasms of the Vlaams Blok.

The VB is almost unique among nationalist parties in opposing abortion, pornography, and "homosexual marriage." In fact, the party was founded in 1977 in a revolt from the Flemish Nationalist Party, whose leaders had joined the sexual revolution. With the universal defection of Christian Democrats and Liberals to the left, it has gradually evolved into the leading conservative party in Belgium, going from 3 percent of the Flemish vote in the 1987 general election to its current 24.1 percent. The VB also draws support from conservatives who do not favor the breakup of Belgium.

Of course, those election figures represent only the Dutch-speaking Flemish, who make up about six million of Belgium's ten million inhabitants. The other four million are French-speaking Walloons, who (with their Flemish allies) have dominated the Belgian political scene and conveyed the quite false impression that Belgium is a predominantly French country. The conflict with the Walloons is multifaceted. There is an economic dimension, as there so often is in regional politics. The sturdier Flemings have not yet embraced the welfare state with the enthusiasm shown by the French-speaking proletariat, and Vlaams Blok leaders have exposed the Belgian government's steady transfer of wealth from the Flemish to the Walloon population. There are also cultural and moral differences, since, by and large, Flanders is more conservative than Wallonia. Finally, language has been a cause of division ever since Franks and other German tribes drove a wedge into Roman Belgica.

Dislike for the Belgian experiment has not been limited to Flanders. Many Walloons have dreamed of unification with France, and those dreams had a chance of

being realized at the end of World War II. In 1980, François Perin, proclaiming he no longer believed in Belgium, resigned from the Senate and went on to write *Histoire d'une nation introuvable* (*History of a nation that cannot be found*). Today, the leader of the Mouvement wallon pour le retour à la France, although it has only about 1,200 members, claims that 15 percent of the French-speaking population views unification with France in positive terms. Wallonian political leaders, like the socialist Claude Eerdeken, have not hesitated to play the French card against Flanders, threatening the Flemish that, if they continued with their nationalist obstruction of socialist progress, France will welcome the Walloons: "Wallonia is not ashamed to live next to such a great country as France, and one day, they will find out that France will be bordering at the gates of Brussels!"

Paul Belien, a Vlaams Blok MP who has been published widely in the English-language press, has argued (in the December 2003 number of the *Salisbury Review*) that Belgium is the corrupt model for the multinational European Union:

In 1989, the then Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens called his country, the "prototype of Europe." "The Federal Belgian State," he said, "is a prefiguration of a Europe of Peoples, united in their organised diversity." Martens also stressed that an artificial country like Belgium "must have a transcendent project to commit itself to, otherwise it becomes very difficult to keep it together. For me that project is: Europe." Based in Brussels, and sharing its capital with Belgium, the European Union is greatly influenced—even infected—by Belgian political attitudes and habits. But, more importantly, Belgium acts as a model for the EU in the latter's efforts to "construct a nation" out of different peoples with separate languages, cultures and traditions. Belgium foreshadows "Europe."

Belgium, Belien argues, is a nation created to deny nationality.

While I was in Brugge, I was unable to meet with Belien, who was vacationing in the Rockies with his family, but, in a transatlantic interview, he explained that the three pillars of the VB are the independence of Flanders, restricted im-

migration, and the preservation of traditional morality. There is some sign of weakening on this last point: Some MP's, not actually members of the VB but elected on their party list, have recently supported "homosexual marriage" and "free speech" (i.e., pornography). However, the VB's leader, Frank Vanhecke, continues to support the conservative position staked out by Dr. Alexandra Colen, a VB member of parliament and, not incidentally, Belien's wife. Dr. Colen and other party leaders are working to prevent the VB from turning into one more anti-immigrant coalition that welcomes people like Pym Fortyn, the assassinated Dutch politician whose principal objection to immigration was Islamic intolerance of "gays."

In Flanders, the left has picked up immigration and sexual morality as sticks with which to beat the right. In Italy, they throw in fascism; in the United States, it is the legacy of slavery. The Germans, however, are the worst off. In Germany, any statement of fact that calls into question the official history of the 1930's and 40's exposes a scholar or journalist to the accusation that he is attempting to revive the Third Reich. Mavericks soon find themselves ostracized, fired, fined, and even jailed.

The most recent victim—or, perhaps, political suicide—is Martin Hohman, an MP for the Christian Democratic Union who has, in the past, opposed both homosexual rights and what he regards as Germany's unfavorable position within the European Union.

His nationalism had already incited accusations of antisemitism, when Hohman, exasperated with German thought control, decided to come out with guns blazing. Turning the tables on those who say that the Germans are a nation of culprits, he asked if the Jews could not also be considered "culprits" for having played so prominent a role in the Bolshevik Revolution. Quoting from a recent book by Johannes Rogalla von Bieberstein, *Jewish Bolshevism, Myth and Reality*, Hohman suggested that German antisemitism in the 30's might be explained as a reaction to the fear of red revolution. The reaction of the CDU leadership was prompt: They expelled Hohman from the party.

Hohman was certainly imprudent to the point of recklessness, and there is an unpleasant "blame the victim" ring to his rhetoric. The facts, however, are not in dispute, and, for bringing up the unpleasant facts, an influential MP has been

drummed out of his party.

One of his friends told me privately that Hohman should have quoted from Jewish books on this question, not from the highly controversial Rogalla von Bieberstein. I spoke with Rogalla von Bieberstein briefly at a conference in Germany sponsored by *Culture Wars*. Although he said nothing to surprise anyone who has studied the history of Bolshevism, his presentation appeared to annoy some of the Germans present in the audience. One of them, an intelligent and cultivated lady, stood up to declare that there were good reasons why this subject has been taboo in Germany and that it should stay taboo. Later, she explained that the author was a disgruntled Prussian, whose family had lost everything, and the failure of his career had made him bitter. When good people feel compelled to adopt *ad hominem* arguments, the only explanation is fear.

Germany is not my country, and I can well understand why some Germans are tired of being the world's whipping boy, why others want to put the ugly past behind them, and why still others are afraid of speaking out. I think they might all be missing the point. While it is true that a great deal of trouble has been caused by Jewish hate groups such as the ADL here in America and international agitators such as *haGalil.com* (which assailed Hohman as a classic antisemite and labels critics of Israel as Nazis), the real problem is the international left, which uses any and all available tactics in its campaign to eliminate national and religious identity. The Germans, because of the undoubtedly crimes of the Third Reich, are very vulnerable, but what of the Flemings? What are the crimes that can keep them in the international prison? I felt a deep sympathy with the Flemish people I met. Perhaps it is the call of blood. As one VB member said to me, "Welcome home."

All the little peoples of the world are opposed by a formidable host arrayed against them: the New World Order (that is, the order imposed by the power of the New World), the European Union, the United Nations, and transnational corporations. So far no one—not the Serbs, not American Southerners, and certainly not the Germans—has successfully defied these forces of darkness. What an irony it would be if the people of Flanders, citizens of a nation designed to deny nationality, were the forerunners of the counterrevolution.